Preface

The Lost Girl deals with one of Lawrence's fundamental concerns—the savage underworld that has been feared and suppressed in the course of civilization. By making the protagonist, Alvina Houghton, atavistic enough to respond to the underworld elements, Lawrence is exploring her underworld experience in her search for a new life. To illustrate both its positive and negative meaning is the chief aim of my account of the book. I am appreciative of the debt I owe to Mr. R. E. Pritchard, whose student I was at the University of Keele.

The Lost Girl

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The Lost Girl, which was begun in 1913 under the title *The Insurrection of Miss Houghton* and finished in 1920, has been regarded by most critics as an artistic failure because of its rather superficial treatment of the theme and its rambling and diffused form, and in any event has been given perhaps the least attention of all his novels (except *The Trespasser*). Behind those rather adverse criticisms, it seems, is the fact that Lawrence started to write the book as a counter-blast to Arnold Bennett's *Anna of the Five Towns*[1] and also wanted it to 'make a perfect selling novel'.[2] Whatever his initial intention may have been, however, this book should not be dismissed as a 'pot-boiler'[3] or 'something of a sport',[4] for it does deal—even if not with complete success—with his fundamental concerns.

One of the difficulties one may face in understanding *The Lost Girl* is perhaps Lawrence's unusual style of writing, which R. P. Draper describes as 'an extraordinary blend of popular romance and realism'.[5] While using a realistic or naturalistic technique in his presentation of Woodhouse society, James Houghton's various business-attempts and Alvina's experiences as a maternity nurse, he develops the most important plot, Alvina's relationship with Cicio, in an almost tritely romantic fashion. Since those realistically presented parts vividly convey in themselves many aspects of a provincial middle-class society in England, one may appreciate the novel more or less on the realistic level. However, *The Lost Girl* is neither a comedy of manners

nor a satire on ineffectual English middle-class values. Its main theme, Alvina Houghton's revolt, should not be regarded, therefore, as a mere novelistic means for such ends. Her revolt, which Lawrence scrupulously traces, is essentially a desperate attempt to transcend the values in her own cultural milieu and seek a new world and life elsewhere. In spite of a certain inconsistency in tone between the early part and the later part of the novel, there is over all an imaginative control in Lawrence's chronicle of Alvina's experience.

Alvina is brought up by her highminded and respectable governess, Miss Frost, who embodies the whole morality of the Houghtons, and apparently remains for twenty years 'the demure, refined creature of her governess' desire' (p. 34; my page numerals refer to the 1950 Penguin edition). Her father, James Houghton, is an incompetent business man, or rather 'a dreamer', who continually seeks fantastic business-attempts, and eventually, after a number of them, takes his own life. Her mother is an invalid and as if to accord with her husband's follies becomes more and more invalid and finally dies of chronic heart-disease. Here it is significant to note Lawrence's comment on her death, which is made against Miss Frost's moral judgement—'Poor Clariss: guilty James':

> Yet why? Why was James more guilty than Clariss? Is the only aim and end of a man's life, to make some woman, or parcel of women, happy? Why? Why should anybody expect to be *made happy,* and develop heart-disease if she isn't? Surely Clariss' heart-disease was a more emphatic sign of obstinate self-importance than ever James' shop-windows were. She expected to be *made happy* (p. 60).

This unsentimental, pitiless comment is not only effective as a direct attack on Miss Frost's naive idealism, which can be reduced to a pure nonsense; but also suggestive of the nature of a new life Alvina is to seek, for her way of life turns out to be very different from that of the ordinary women in her society who simply expect to be made happy. Even on this occasion Alvina refrains from pondering on her mother's life and fate, and we are told that 'Alvina had the old-fashioned wisdom to let be, and not to think. After all, it was not for her to reconstruct her parents' lives...Her day was not their day, their life was not hers' (p. 59).

In fact, Alvina's rather peculiar nature is sometimes apparent even in her childhood. Despite her apparent demure, dutiful and affectionate attitude, it is an 'odd, sardonic tilt' on her eyelids that constantly betrays her characteristic innate nature:

> She would watch the girl's strange face, that could take on a gargoyle look. She would

see the eyes rolling strangely under the sardonic eyelids, and then Miss Frost would feel that never, never had she known anything so utterly alien and incomprehensible and unsympathetic as her own beloved Vina (p. 34).

This passage is representative in that it reveals how different Alvina's nature is from Miss Frost's. The epithet, 'a gargoyle look', applied for her strange face, which Lawrence also describes elsewhere as 'a look of old knowledge and deliberate derision' (Ibid.), implies that there is a barbaric, primitive quality in her self.

Having such a nature, Alvina regards the civilized young men in Woodhouse as 'outsiders'. It is an Australian, Alexander Graham, who attracts her for the first time. He is a dark little man, 'with very dark eyes, and a body which seemed to move inside his clothing', and when he laughs he shows 'a strong mouthful of cruel, compact teeth' (p. 35). Undoubtedly Lawrence designs this dark Australian as an alien, sensual, demonic being[6]—a being antithetical to the young men in her society. No wonder respectable Miss Frost finds him 'a perfect stranger' and altogether repulsive to her! But it is to his savage features that Alvina is perversely drawn: 'She found him fascinating, but a trifle repulsive. And she was not sure whether she hated the repulsive element, or whether she rather gloried in it' (p. 36). Alexander, on the other hand, is enticed by her 'half-derisive', 'oddly sinister' look and 'a curious bronze-like resonance' of her voice which 'unpleasantly [acts] on most English nerves' (p. 37). Thus they respond to the same uncivilized quality in each other. What they feel towards each other, then, cannot be called 'love' in its usual sense, but it may be more properly described as a sexual excitement of a primitive kind. Alvina misses him, but, we read, she 'missed the extreme excitement of him rather than the human being he was' (Ibid.).

Having been brought up by Miss Frost with strict respectable morality, Alvina's such feeling is buried in her unconscious. When she is in a waking mind—'in her period of lucidity'—she feels him 'a terrible outsider, an inferior' (p. 38). Yet at the same time she nevertheless finds herself 'in a night where the little man loomed large, terribly large, potent and magical, while Miss Frost had dwindled to nothingness' (Ibid.). This clearly shows how deeply the dark, sensual being has moved her, and also reassures us of a barbaric, primitive quality in her self. The conflict between the two contrary states of her mind puts her in an extreme psychological tension, which remains even after Alexander is gone.

Alvina's subsequent decision to train as a maternity nurse therefore expresses a vital need in her to liberate herself from such a tension in her mind, rather than a mere escape from the stifling atmosphere in Woodhouse. In London she gets 'a perverse pleasure' from the sordidness of

the city, and has no difficulty in getting on with her 'vulgar and coarse' companions as well as petty young doctors. 'Like another being', indeed, she goes through her training experiences in the lying-in hospital, and becomes 'a rather fat, warm-coloured young woman, strapping and strong-looking, and with a certain bounce' (p. 49). Thus, her whole experience as a nurse is a reaction against her own upbringing—Lawrence aptly describes her state at the time as 'a sort of play-acting based on hysteria' (p. 47). Nevertheless for Alvina it also means a significant initiation, because she realizes for the first time the limitation of her governess: 'How many infernos deeper than Miss Frost could ever know, did she not travel? the inferno of the human animal, the human organism in its convulsions, the human social beast in its abjection and its degradation' (Ibid.). This realization in turn brings her to full awareness of her need for a new life which lies in the opposite direction to Miss Frost's way of life:

> Purity and high-mindedness—the beautiful, but unbearable tyranny. The beautiful, unbearable tyranny of Miss Frost! It was time now for Miss Frost to die. It was time for that perfected flower to be gathered to immortality. A lovely *immortel*. But an obstruction to other, purple and carmine blossoms which were in bud on the stem...Black-purple and red anemones were due, real Adonis blood, and strange individual orchids, spotted and fantastic (p. 51).

These flower images themselves imply that the new life Alvina desires consists of hitherto suppressed sensual experience. Although her longing is not yet fulfilled, we are now sure that she is to go beyond the boundary of provincial moral values that Miss Frost represents.

In this connection the scene which describes Alvina's visit to her father's coal mine, Throttle-Ha'penny, is most significant. Here we are made to see what she is seeking to fulfil her own life and fate. She goes down the pit with a collier as a guide, who seems 'not human: a creature of the subterranean world':

> It was as if she were in her tomb forever, like the dead and everlasting Egyptians. She was frightened, but fascinated...There was a thickness in the air, a sense of dark, fluid presence in the thick atmosphere, the dark, fluid, viscous voice of the collier making a broad-vowelled, clapping sound in her ear. He seemed to linger near her as if he knew—as if he knew—what? Something forever unknowable and inadmissible, something that belonged purely to the underground: to the slaves who work underground: knowledge humiliated, subjected, but ponderous and inevitable (p. 64).

The coal mine here represents the modern underworld, and the whole psychic and moral underworld as well. Its dark, thick atmosphere impinges on Alvina's civilized mind a sense of death. It is remarkable that her response to it is ambivalent, both fright and fascination—this reminds us of her response to the dark, sensual Australian. Her innate barbaric self, on the other hand, is ready to perceive a 'dark, fluid presence'—the uncivilized, underworld force, which is identified with the sensual voice of the collier. He seems to linger near her, because he knows what she is unconsciously craving for—dark, primitive blood-knowledge, which is 'humiliated, subjected' by the civilized mind-knowledge, but nevertheless 'ponderous and inevitable'. In the underworld darkness, with the 'grey-obscure' collier, she feels herself 'melting out', her mind dissolving, 'to become a mere vocal ghost, a presence in the thick atmosphere' (Ibid.). This suggests the destructive nature of the inhuman underworld power that reduces any being to a mere element, and her unconscious submissiveness to such a power as well.

When she returns to the civilized day-world, she finds it full of unreal beauties, 'all golden and floating like atmospheric majolica'; but it is no more than a vision—'the bubbling-up of the under-darkness' (p. 65). Only her underworld experience remains real in her, and she imagines the fearful destruction of the civilized world order by the underworld power:

> Slaves of the underworld!...But tall—the miners seemed to her to loom tall and grey, in their enslaved magic. Slaves who would cause the super-imposed day-order to fall... collectively, something bubbled up in them, the force of darkness which had no master and no control. It would bubble and stir in them as earthquakes stir the earth. It would be simply disastrous, because it had no master. There was no dark master in the world. The puerile world went on crying out for a new Jesus, another saviour from the sky, another heavenly superman. When what was wanted was a Dark Master from the underworld (Ibid.).

Alvina's craving for 'a Dark Master from the underworld' is not inconsistent with our concept of her character, for what distinguishes her above all, as we have seen, is her innate barbaric self which is susceptible to the underworld elements. The miners, as slaves of the modern underworld, collectively represent the potent underworld power that may subvert the super-imposed, 'puerile' order of the civilized world; but such subversion would merely result in a chaos since the modern underworld has no 'Dark Master' who puts it in order. The underworld power is thus conceived by Lawrence as at once positive and negative. This is also true of the ambivalent state of Alvina's mind: she needs to liberate her barbaric self by means of her underworld experience,

but at the same time she fears that it may destroy her human identity as she is without 'a Dark Master'—a being that controls her in a state of order.

Living in a provincial English society with its restricted moral values, Alvina's desire for a new life cannot be satisfied. She withers towards 'old-maiddom', grubbing away like a housemaid at her father's house. Like ordinary girls she thinks of taking a job for an escape, but she immediately rebels against the idea to 'serve some mechanical routine of modern work' which seems to her 'the most vulgar, sordid and humiliated of all forms of slavery' (p. 105). As the narrator remarks, there is 'no hope for Alvina in the ordinary. If help came, it would have to come from the extraordinary' (p. 107). In the meantime, her father opens a little theatre, 'Houghton's Pleasure Palace'—his last fantastic business-attempt, and she starts to work there as pianist. Among the 'odd, extraneous' artistes, whom she finds 'indifferent to ordinary morality', she enjoys the life of 'being déclassée' which at least makes her feel outside 'the unbearable tyranny' of her society's respectable morality. It is very characteristic of her perverse nature that among the artistes she is 'more fascinated by the odd fish', particularly by a tattooed Japanese with a look of 'toad-like lewdness', who suggests a dangerous primitive power with an eagle on his shoulders and a serpent round his loins (p. 148).

In these circumstances Cicio is introduced into the novel, as a member of the Natcha-Kee-Tawara Troupe that specialize in the 'Red Indian' mime show. The troupe consists of four young men of different European nationalities, and a French-woman called 'Madame' who perfectly controls them in a ritualistic manner. Their show itself is full of primitive rituals of a savage kind, and it makes a striking contrast with the civilized, respectable Woodhouse society. This is well represented in the scene of their procession on 'the grey pallor of Knarborough Road'. The scene is also illuminating about Alvina's uniqueness in the society:

> "...Exactly like Indians," [says Miss Pinnegar.] "You can't believe your eyes. My word what a terrifying race they—" Here she uttered a scream and ran back clutching the wall as Cicio swept past, brushing her with his horse's tail, and actually swinging his spear so as to touch Alvina and James Houghton lightly with the butt of it. James too started with a cry, the mob at the corner screamed. But Alvina caught the slow, mischievous smile as the painted horror showed his teeth in passing; she was able to flash back an excited laugh (pp. 174–75).

While the reaction of Miss Pinnegar and other people is quite ordinary in the situation, that of Alvina really is extraordinary—we might say even incongruous. There seems to be a mysterious

rapport between her and Cicio. It should be noted, however, that she herself is not at all conscious of such a reaction, for when she is in a waking state of mind, those young men in Indian war-paint make her think 'Awful things men were, savage, cruel, underneath their civilization', and Cicio simply makes her feel 'she would not trust him for one single moment' (p. 167).

In fact, Alvina's impression of the procession is quite ambiguous. On the one hand, there is no doubt that she was deeply moved by it—it must have been more than 'a delicious excitement' as she terms it herself. But on the other hand, she is not free of her own self-conscious, civilized mind, and so cannot retort even Miss Pinnegar's bare realism: 'It's interesting in a way, just to show what savage Red-Indians were like. But it's childish... You know they're only men dressed up, for money...' (pp. 175–76). Alvina cannot help being put out by this spoil-sport remark, and falls into a dismal state of mind:

> She really hated Miss Pinnegar. Yet she had nothing to answer. They *were* unreal, Madame and Cicio and the rest. Cicio was just a fantasy blown in on the wind, to blow away again. The real, permanent thing was Woodhouse, the *semper idem* Knarborough Road, and the unchangeable grubby gloom of Manchester House, with the stuffy, padding Miss Pinnegar, and her father, whose fingers, whose very soul seemed dirty with pennies. These were the solid, permanent fact. These were life itself. And Cicio, splashing up on his bay horse and green cloth, he was mountebank and an extraneous nonentity, a coloured old rag blown down the Knarborough Road into Limbo... (p. 176).

Inability to express her real feeling intensifies her realistic civilized mind, which makes her regard the Natcha-Kee-Tawaras as 'unreal' and Cicio as a mere 'fantasy'. But the tone of this passage nevertheless betrays how deeply the procession impressed her unconscious self. We should note that her denial of the troupe is only balanced with her more emphatic negation of the realities of her civilized society as a whole. The fundamental problem with her is thus the continual conflict in her between her innate, unconscious, barbaric self and her superimposed, civilized self, and the more she denies the former by means of the latter, the more barbaric the former becomes. She gets fretted and accuses Miss Pinnegar hysterically:

> "Alvina, are you mad!" said her father.
> "Wonder I'm not," said Alvina, "considering what my life is" (p. 177).

The focal point of Alvina's relationship with Cicio is then how she will overcome the conflict

in her self and where she will attain a new full being in life. In other words, Lawrence's main concern is not so much with their relationship itself as with the consequences brought upon Alvina in her relation with Cicio. Hence the significance of Cicio's role in the novel is basically restricted to the point that he embodies another way of human existence which is opposed to that of civilized people. Cicio's character, however, is represented not only from this point of view, but also from the other 'civilized' point of view as Alvina herself sees his 'modern vulgarism, and decadence' (p. 265). This latter perspective seems to save the novel from a serious break-down in its unity, for it links the early realistically presented part with the later part, which otherwise would have become a total Lawrentian myth.

On a realistic level, Cicio has real limitations as a man. Having 'the half-loutish, sensual-subjected way of the Italians' (p. 194), he is vulgar, uncouth and stupid, and Alvina is not blind to such aspects of him as she finds the silver ring on his finger 'a symbol of his subjection, inferiority' (Ibid.). Some of his limitations are suggested by his meaningless violence of using a knife in his quarrel with Max, and by his mean interest in Alvina's material property. Also it cannot be dennied that behind his proposal to Alvina is his petty intention to rise in the world by marrying a civilized English woman. In fact, there is a good reason for Alvina's fear that he might be simply 'stupid and bestial' (p. 216).

Yet, from the beginning, it is made clear that Alvina is overwhelmed by a certain physical beauty of him. She immediately notices his 'tender, dusky Mediterranean hands, the slender wrists, slender for a man naturally loose and muscular' (p. 159), and his 'rather long, fine Greek nose' (p. 160), 'yellow, dusky-set eyes' (pp. 168–69) and 'long black lashes' (p. 160), animal-like 'strange fine black hair' (Ibid.), which give his face 'a dark, mysterious glamour' (p. 197). Here in Cicio's figure those primitive features of Alexander Graham, to which Alvina made a rather perverse response, are now represented in a more refined form. It is these 'passionate and remote' physical characteristics, which seem to her 'refined through ages of forgotten culture' (p. 196), that cast a spell on her and make her feel 'as if hypnotised' (p. 208). Cicio even seems to her to be 'the only passionately good-natured man she had ever seen' (p. 173).

Cicio is by no means a noble savage. In the very nature of such 'unknown' beauty of him is an extreme male sexual potency which seeks its dominance over her. The following is the description of their first sexual experience:

> She felt his heavy, muscular predominance. So he took her in both arms, powerful, mysterious, horrible in the pitch dark. Yet the sense of the unknown beauty of him weighed her down like some force. If for one moment she could have escaped from that black spell

of his beauty, she would have been free...But the spell was on her, of his darkness and unfathomed handsomeness. And he killed her. He simply took her and assassinated her. How she suffered no one could tell. Yet all the time, his lustrous dark beauty, unbearable...He intended her to be his slave, she knew (p. 244).

This passage can be understood as parallel to the coal mine scene. Alvina's sense of her death is of the same nature as she felt it in the darkness of the pit: it is her civilized consciousness that makes her feel 'dead'. Cicio, 'the dark Southerner', here seems to represent for Alvina 'the force of darkness'—the savage underworld power—in its human form, which simply assassinates her—destroys her human identity. This aspect of Alvina's feeling towards Cicio never changes. She is always mesmerised by his dark, sensual beauty and feels herself 'his slave' or 'a victim' of his inhuman sexual power. The crux of their sexual experience is his perfect dominance over her and her total submission to it.

Alvina's relationship with the dark Italian youth eventually puts her into a state of being 'an outcast' in her society. As Miss Pinnegar cries in despair, she is 'a lost girl' according to Woodhouse ethical values; but she is now willing to accept her own fate, to be 'outside the pale of her own people' (p. 258), and lets herself 'go down the unknown dark flood of his will, borne from her old footing forever' (p. 279):

Now Alvina felt herself swept—she knew not whither—but into a dusky region where men had dark faces and translucent yellow eyes, where all speech was foreign and life was not her life. It was as if she had fallen from her own world on to another, darker star, where meanings were all changed...In all the passion of her lover she had found a loneliness, beautiful, cool, like a shadow she wrapped round herself and which gave her a sweetness of perfection. It was a moment of stillness and completeness (Ibid.).

Here is revealed what Alvina has found by liberating her dark, unconscious self at the cost of her complete submission to her lover's dark, inhuman passion.

Still, however, some part of her self struggles against Cicio's 'strange, mesmeric power' which dominates her and makes her feel his slave. She fights 'against her own desire to fall at his feet' (p. 280), for if she lets herself be his slave, she must allow his fearful reign over her existence, which inevitably entails the death of her conscious being. Facing the fall of Manchester House, she reflects on her life and feels not only her native place but also Cicio has insulted her. Then she decides to leave Cicio and the Natcha-Kee-Tawaras, and begins to live on her own as a

maternity nurse. She enjoys this new freedom of life in the civilized society which respects her own individuality. Thus, for the time being, her civilized, conscious mind subdues her dark unconscious.

Alvina's reconciliation with Cicio is represented in the scene in which she is nursing Effie Tuke, a woman in childbirth pains. The two women hear Cicio playing a serenade on his mandoline outside the house. Effie, fascinated by it, throws a rose asking him to sing a song. When he will not take the rose, she sends Alvina to him and thus they meet again. Their rapprochement coincides with the beginning of Effie's childbirth pains, and Alvina returns the house to nurse her. Cicio starts to sing a despairing Neopolitan song, which sounds 'animal and inhuman on the night' (p. 330). "'Oh, the flesh is a beastly thing!'" cries the suffering woman. "'To make a man howl outside there like that, because you're here. And to make me howl because I've got a child inside me. It's unbearable!'" (p. 331). Shortly afterwards there is the following talk between Effie and Alvina:

> "Nurse!" cried Effie. "It's *no use* trying to get a grip on life. You're just at the mercy of *Forces,*" she shrieked angrily.
>
> "Why not?" said Alvina. "There are good life-forces. Even the will of God is a life-force"...
>
> "But I hate life. It's nothing but a mass of forces. *I* am intelligent. Life isn't intelligent. Look at it this moment. Do you call this intelligent? Oh—Oh! It's horrible! Oh—!" She was wild and sweating with her pains...The moment Mrs Tuke recovered her breath she began again.
>
> "I hate life, and faith, and such things. Faith is only fear. And life is a mass of unintelligent forces to which intelligent beings are submitted. Prostituted. Oh—oh!!—prostituted—"
>
> "Perhaps life itself is something bigger than intelligence," said Alvina.
>
> "Bigger than intelligence!" shrieked Effie. "*Nothing* is bigger than intelligence. Your man is a hefty brute. His yellow eyes *aren't* intelligent. They're *animal*—"
>
> "No," said Alvina. "Something else. I wish he didn't attract me—" (pp. 334–35).

J.M. Murry writes about this scene: it is 'beautifully done; Lawrence never more perfectly harmonized his symbolism and his realism'.[7] But it seems to me that Lawrence is not so successful in rendering this explicit discussion of the novel's theme, because when considered on the realistic level, the conversation is improbable and rather absurd, and the whole scene is somewhat

grotesque.

The words uttered by Mrs Tuke, however, are significant in that they bear some actual truth about Alvina's life. For fundamentally her life is, as it were, the conflict in her between the 'intelligent', civilized consciousness and the 'unintelligent forces' of the barbaric unconscious; and in her relationship with Cicio she subjects the former to the latter, thus prostituting her intelligent being. The difference between the two women, however, is in their concept of life itself. Effie regards 'life' merely as the irrational forces, opposing it to rational 'intelligence' which she believes to be supreme, while Alvina believes that life is something beyond such a definition, though she is by no means sure about her own belief in life as well as in her lover.

The incident results in Alvina's revulsion from human entanglement into escape of sheer isolation. Being solitary by nature, she feels 'perfect liberty, pure, almost paradisal' (p. 337), but this state does not last more than three days. On the fourth day she falls into despair again, knowing no way out of it. It is ominous enough that on that day she has a dream of Alexander Graham who fascinated her with his barbaric, sensual quality for the first time in her life. She decides to meet Cicio, but with no future prospect: 'The only thing to do was to act: seize hold of life and wring its neck' (Ibid.). In the course of this meeting she involuntarily agrees to marry him. It is significant that Lawrence emphasizes here more than anywhere else Cicio's demonic quality: 'His eyes had a curious yellow fire...with a demon quality of yearning'/'He smiled, a fine, subtle smile, like a demon's...'/'And he was reaching forward to her as a snake reaches...'/ 'he had a strange mesmeric power over her, as if he possessed the sensual secrets...' (p. 340). At this moment Cicio is representing some actual demon or evil—a certain mythic entity, rather than a human being, and this makes it convincing to the reader that Alvina's powerlessness under his passionate will becomes inevitable—out of the reach of any moral questionings:

> Dark and insidious he was; he had no regard for her...Why didn't she revolt? Why couldn't she? She was as if bewitched. She couldn't fight against her bewitchment...She felt herself like one of the old sacred prostitutes: a sacred prostitute (pp. 340–41).

As the word 'sacred' suggests, Alvina almost deifies Cicio. There is no longer the conflict between her civilized, conscious mind and her barbaric, primitive unconscious: the one is quite extinct under the fully unleashed power of the other, and she is perfectly content under her lover's 'inhumanly regardless' dark passion. It seems that Cicio is for her transformed into 'a Dark Master from the underworld' whose existence she had craved for at the coal mine:

There was no wonderful intimacy of speech, such as she had always imagined...He loved her—but it was in a dark, mesmeric way, which did not let her be herself. His love did not stimulate her or excite her. It extinguished her. She had to be the quiescent, obsecure woman: she felt as if she were veiled. Her thoughts were dim, in the dim back regions of consciousness—yet, somewhere, she almost exulted... Somewhere even she was vastly proud of the dark veiled eternal loneliness she felt, under his shadow (p. 341).

Now Alvina seems never to 'wake out of her dark, warm coma' (Ibid.) in the midst of Cicio's unknown love. Before they leave for Italy—since it is 'his will', they stay in London at his Anglicized cousin's house. But despite the fact that this English-Italian household is curious to her, Alvina goes through those days completely in her unconscious state. She is aware of nothing except of the presence of Cicio. And we are made to see objectively her glorification or rather deification of his being when she, 'sightless with tears...kissed his fingers that held the pen, there in the midst of the crowded, vulgar Consulate' (p. 345). Moreover, at the same place for a moment she even swears inside herself that 'God Himself should not take her away from this man. She would commit herself to him through every eternity' (Ibid.). Such is the culmination of Alvina's relationship with Cicio, and its nature is most clearly described in the following passage:

It was his physical presence which cast a spell over her. She lived within his aura. And she submitted to him as if he had extended his dark nature over her. She knew nothing about him. She lived mindlessly within his presence, quivering within his influence, as if his blood beat in her. She *knew* she was subjected (pp. 343–44).

Is *The Lost Girl,* then, a manifestation of 'the doctrine of mindlessness'[8] as Katherine Mansfield calls it? Is Lawrence at once condemning modern 'mind-knowledge' and celebrating his own concept of 'blood-knowledge'? These questions may be affirmed by observing his representation of Cicio. Throughout the novel he is represented as if he were only a mindless, sensual being, as it is characterized by his numerous allusions to animals; he is actually associated with such animals as 'cat', 'lion', 'leopard', 'snake' and 'sphinx'. His other aspects are also shown, but only negatively as his self-consciousness, stupidity, vulgarity and money-consciousness. Since Lawrence attributes these negative aspects of his to the effects of 'modern education', which, he remarks, 'so shallow, was much more efficacious than instinct' (p. 265), they function in a way to intensify his instinctive, sensual quality. His eventual dominance over Alvina, then, sug-

gests that such a quality has proved to be true. In the description of his 'emergence' after his marriage to Alvina is an implication that Lawrence is justifying a purely sensual being like Cicio:

> Cicio really was much handsomer since his marriage. He seemed to emerge. Before, he had seemed to make himself invisible in the streets, in England, altogether. But now something unfolded in him, he was a potent, glamorous presence, people turned to watch him. There was a certain dark, leopard-like pride in the air about him, something that the English people watched (p. 342).

Yet, the novel cannot be explained properly in terms of Lawrence's 'doctrine of mindlessness', for the relationship between Alvina and Cicio is only significant as *an* experience on Alvina's part in her search for a new life. As his surname, Marasca, which means 'bitter cherry', is interpreted by Alvina herself as 'dark, poison fruit' (Ibid.), Cicio is fundamentally no more than a symbol of a demonic or evil existence; that is to say, his role in the novel remains within the fact that he represents for Alvina the 'unknown' being of savage, primitive nature, which is forbidden and suppressed in the civilized society where she has been brought up. Alvina's total submission to his dominance, therefore, signifies above all her own problem—a desperate need in her to 'extinguish' her conscious, civilized mind so that she might go beyond her own society's values and attain a new being. What her relationship with Cicio amounts to is the death of her civilized self, which appears as an image of the coffin of England on their way to Italy:

> England, beyond the water, rising with ash-grey, corpse-grey cliffs, and streaks of snow on the downs above. England, like a long, ash-grey coffin slowly submerging... long and ash-grey and dead, with streaks of snow like cerements. That was England! Her thought flew to Woodhouse, the grey centre of it all (p. 347).

However, the small mountain village in southern Italy where Cicio takes Alvina cannot be a promised land for her. On the contrary, she is made to see the reality of the savage, primitive world—so far veiled under the magical beauty of her lover—which is more 'annihilating' than his dark, mesmeric love. It extinguishes not only the Englishwoman but also the very natives themselves, making them all seem 'lost, forlorn aborigines' (p. 373). Lawrence describes the spirit of the place in the following terms:

> It seems there are places which resist us, which have the power to overthrow our psychic

being. It seems as if every country had its potent negative centres, localities which savagely and triumphantly refuse our living culture. And Alvina had struck one of these, here on the edge of the Abruzzi (pp. 370–71).

As such an entity the savage, cold landscape of the mountain village horrifies Alvina but at the same time enruptures her. Its terrific beauty–'the grand, pagan twilight of the valleys'–steals her soul away, makes her feel 'transfigured' in it. With her own innate 'mediumistic soul' she learns the mystery of life in the pagan world of the past:

A savage hardness came in her heart. The gods who had demanded human sacrifice were quite right, immutably right. The fierce, savage gods who dipped their lips in blood, these were the true gods (p. 372).

This fearful insight into the heathen past and the 'inhuman' present, the reality prior to the human civilized world makes her realize that she has 'gone beyond the world into the pre-world' –has 'reopened on the old eternity' (Ibid.). It might be said that now Alvina has touched the secret in the core of a 'new' life she has been seeking all her life. For a moment she is seized with 'a wild, terrible hapiness...beyond despair, but very like despair' (Ibid.). But soon she comes to see that she can never go on living in such a world, for it is impossible for a civilized woman to become a part of the savage, primitive mode of life. As the days go by, she is more and more convinced of its impossibility:

She was beginning to feel that, if she lived in this part of the world at all, she must avoid the *inside* of it...If she was to save her sanity she must keep to the open air, and avoid any contact with human interiors. When she thought of the inside of the native people she shuddered with repulsion...They were horrible (p. 393).

But the outside world–the nature itself–which has fascinated her with its magical beauty now turns 'vindictive' to her with its pre-world elements:

The more she wandered, the more the shadow of the by-gone pagan world seemed to come over her...She seemed to feel in the air strange Furies, Lemures, things that had haunted her with their tomb-frenzied vindictiveness since she was a child and had pored over the illustrated Classical Dictionary. Black and cruel presences were in the under-air. They

were furtive and slinking. They bewitched you with loveliness, and lurked with fangs to hurt you afterwards. There it was: the fangs sheathed in beauty: the beauty first, and then, horribly, inevitably, the fangs (p. 394).

Here is represented the culmination of Alvina's search for a new world and life. It has been a search for the forgotten past—the savage underworld that has been feared and suppressed in the course of civilization. The passage suggests that now she has finally discovered the mystery of her relationship with Cicio as well as that of her innate darker, barbaric self. When the novel ends leaving Alvina lost in this pagan world of the past, with a touch of hope of Cicio's taking her to America, it gives us the feeling that her experience of 'another mystery of life' will lead her towards the fulfilment of a new life.

Alvina's search for a new life, we can gather, is also Lawrence's. By making the heroine atavistic enough to submit herself to the underworld force, he is exploring in his imagination both its positive and negative meaning. As her experience explains, he finds its positive quality in its destructiveness: it was vitally necessary for Alvina to extinguish her civilized consciousness to transcend the futile values in her society. At the same time he has to deny its influence on his being, for in its very nature it is always annihilating human existence itself: Alvina had to realize that she must go back to the civilized world. *The Lost Girl* distinctively marks Lawrence's repudiation of his own civilization, but also implies his hope to recreate a new world and life in the civilized society.

NOTES

1. See *The Collected Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, ed. Harry T. Moore (London, 1962), pp. 150–1.
2. *Op. cit.*, p. 602. See also pp. 628–9.
3. Graham Hough, *The Dark Sun* (London, 1956), p. 90; Eliseo Vivas, *The Failure and Triumph of Art* (Bloomington, 1960), p. 21.
4. Anthony Beal, *D. H. Lawrence* (Edinburgh, 1961), p. 59.
5. Ronald P. Draper, *D. H. Lawrence* (New York, 1964), p. 89.
6. See Julian Moynahan, *The Deed of Life* (Princeton, 1963), pp. 127–8; R. E. Pritchard, *Body of Darkness* (London, 1971), p. 129.
7. J. Middleton Murry, *Son of Woman* (London, 1931), p. 144.
8. *D. H. Lawrence: The Critical Heritage*, ed. R. P. Draper (London, 1970), p. 144.